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Damage to U.S. as Well as CIA Seen

Evidence is beginning to mount that those people who started to publicize CIA operations and criticize its practices didn't help the cause of the United States in its battle against Communist imperialism.

On the surface, it looked like a natural thing for some youngster in the ranks of a student organization to attract attention to himself by demanding an end to CIA subsidies of his group. No thought was given, however, to the consequences of the exposure. Some newspaper dispatches created the impression that something unethical and improper had been done by the government of the United States.

War, of course, is unethical in itself. Thus, to try to prevent a war by finding out what the enemy is doing involves surreptitious detective work and it is essential. But there are some critics who can say that even this is an invasion of somebody else's privacy.

Realistically speaking, the damage now has been done. The CIA has been given a body blow which can interfere with its effectiveness in future years. Throughout the world, where there are many intelligence systems, officials have watched with dismay and surprise the manner in which America's intelligence organization is being thwarted in its efforts to combat the Soviet operations in different parts of the world.

An intelligence officer who represents the United States in some foreign countries had this to say recently to a representative of U.S. News & World Report:

"The U.S., not just the CIA, suffered a severe defeat in this thing.

"The U.S. still must fight to prevent the Communists from having all their own way in international meetings of students—or teachers, or scientists, journalists, labor unions, whatever.

"But now that the CIA cover has been 'blown,' the job will cost much more. And it will take a long time before any U.S. organization or group can regain the effectiveness that the National Student Association had.

"These students were not instructed how to act, except in a very few cases. Main reliance was on the American instincts and patriotism of almost all the students who were financially helped to attend."

Little did the Americans who criticized the CIA, both inside and outside of Congress, realize perhaps how penetrating is the Communist influence in Latin America, where at any moment trouble can be stirred up which can involve the United States in more wars. What is happening too, in the Eastern bloc of Communist countries in Europe is an example of how difficult it is for the United States to "build bridges" with those countries. Despite all the outward appearance of a growing friendliness and the talk about the advantages of consular treaties, the Warsaw government deliberately denied former Vice President Richard Nixon a visa to enter Poland.

Unfortunately, some members of the American press did not take into account the damage they were doing their own government in the kind of publicity they gave to the exposure of the CIA subsidies to student organizations. The impression conveyed was that the United States government was subsidizing students within the United States and attempting to interfere with their operations in this country.

Actually, the Central Intelligence Agency has no authority or jurisdiction over anything that happens within the United States. The whole purpose of the CIA is to get information from foreign countries and to help American students who travel abroad to present the American point of view and learn what the Communist imperialists are saying and doing in student gatherings.

Now that student organizations have been held up to public criticism, doubtless these same youth groups will find more difficulties abroad. They will be suspected of representing the government, and they will have a problem in trying to prove that they are independent of governmental influence and subsidies. All this could have been avoided if the CIA had been given in a Cold War operation the same patriotic support that a military force receives at all times.

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